

SCHLAICKER, JES

DRAWER

19A

Artists-S

MI. 2009.025.02497

Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Jes Schlaikjer

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



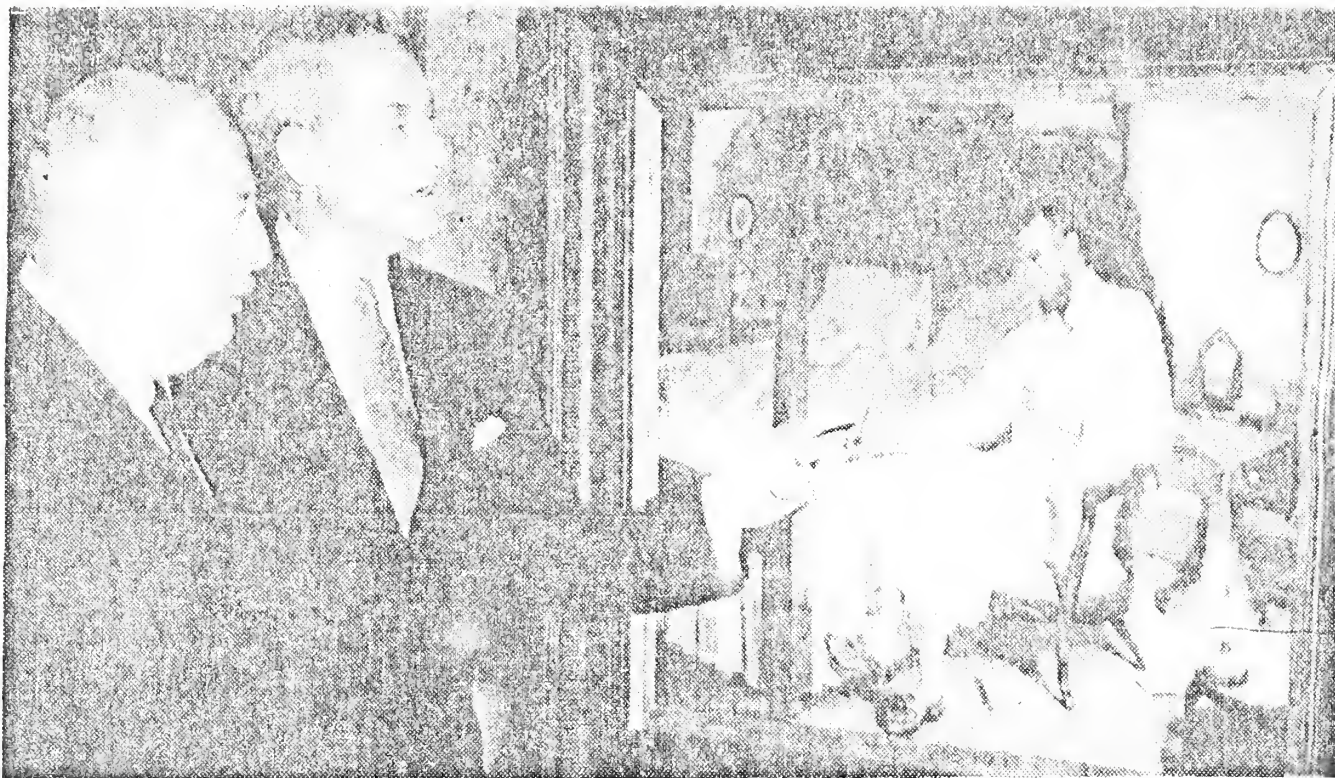
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<http://archive.org/details/artistsofaslinc>



Associated Press wirephoto

NEW LINCOLN PAINTING—Artist Jes Schlaikjer (left) and Sen. John Sherman Cooper, R., Ky., after the unveiling yesterday of the Lincoln painting in the Old Senate Office Building rotunda. Mr. Schlaikjer's painting shows President Lincoln making notes for his Emancipation Proclamation in September, 1862.



Night Work for Lincoln: Artist Joe Schlaikjer of New York watches as Senator John Sherman Cooper (R.-Ky.) describes a new painting, depicting Abraham

Lincoln sitting on the edge of his bed making an early draft of the Emancipation Proclamation.
(AP Wirephoto)

ABE SCRIBBLES AT HIS BEDSIDE—

New Lincoln Painting Stirs Praise, Doubts

Washington, D.C. (AP) — Something new in the way of Abraham Lincoln paintings turned up Monday on Capitol Hill. It shows Lincoln in a white nightshirt.

The picture, by New York and Washington artist Joe Schlaikjer, was ceremoniously unveiled in the old Senate Office Building rotunda by Senator John Sherman Cooper (R.-Ky.) and a group of other lawmakers before a somewhat bemused audience of exactly 14.

Cooper, chairman of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, was enthusiastic.

"The painting," he said, "has captured the simple dignity, the solemn earnestness, and determination of President Lincoln just before the Battle of Antietam."

Some others present were more reserved in their praise for the painting, which depicts the night-robed Lincoln seated beside a four-poster bed scribbling notes for his Emancipation Proclamation in September, 1862.

"What's the message, bit?" inquired one tourist. "They're not trying to make Lincoln was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, are they?"

An official hastily explained that artist Schlaikjer was only trying to be historically accurate — that, in addition to the nightshirt and brocaded slippers, the picture includes the stovepipe hat in which Lincoln used to stash notes.

Another onlooker questioned the lighting arrangements in the bedroom. The only source of illumination seems to be a kerosene lamp placed so low on the table that Lincoln obviously is writing in his own shadow.

Even the executive director of the commission, William E. Barringer, voiced one quiet doubt. He said the artist's perspective made the bed look much too small for Lincoln's gangling frame.

"He'd have to sleep sidewise," Barringer murmured.

A spokesman said Schlaikjer did the painting in 1957, in preparation for the Lincoln Sesquicentennial. Until the unveiling, it was stored in a Washington museum, away from viewers.

The work was done out of Schlaikjer's imagination, the spokesman said, but only after the artist had consulted with Lincoln scholars.

March 10, 1959



LINCOLN IN A NIGHTSHIRT—

This new painting of Abraham Lincoln in a white nightshirt was unveiled Monday in the old Senate office building rotunda where it stirred up mixed feelings. The painting by Jes Schlaikler,

New York artist, depicts Lincoln scribbling notes for his Emancipation Proclamation. Sen. Cooper (R., Ky.) praised the painting which he said captured the simple dignity of the Great Emancipator. An unidentified tourist thought

differently, saying "What's the nightshirt bit? They're not trying to make out Lincoln was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, are they?"

Upsets Some People

Lincoln in a Nightshirt Shown in Senate Painting

WASHINGTON, Mar. 9 (AP).—Something new in the way of Abraham Lincoln paintings turned up on Capitol Hill today. It shows Lincoln in a white nightshirt.

The picture, by New York and Washington artist Jes Schlaikjer, was ceremoniously unveiled in the Old Senate Office Building rotunda by Sen. John Sherman Cooper, R., Ky., and a group of other lawmakers before a somewhat bemused audience of exactly fourteen.

Cooper Likes It

Sen. Cooper, chairman of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, was enthusiastic.

"The painting," he said, "has captured the simple dignity, the solemn earnestness and determination of President Lincoln just before the Battle of Antietam."

Some others present were more reserved in their praise for the painting, which depicts the night-robed Lincoln seated beside a four-poster bed scribbling notes for his Emancipation Proclamation in September, 1862.

Ku-Klux Klan?

"What's the nightshirt bit?" inquired one tourist. "They're not trying to make out Lincoln was a member of the Ku-Klux Klan, are they?"

An official hastily explained that Schlaikjer was only trying

to be historically accurate—that, in addition to the nightshirt and brocaded slippers, the picture included the stovepipe hat in which Lincoln used to stash notes.

Another onlooker questioned the lighting arrangements in the bedroom. The only source of illumination seems to be a kerosene lamp placed so low on the table that Lincoln obviously is writing in his own shadow.

Bed Too Small

Even the executive director of the commission, Prof. William E. Barringer, voiced one quiet doubt. He said the artist's perspective made the bed look much too small for Lincoln's gangling frame.

"He'd have to sleep sidewise," Prof. Barringer murmured.

A spokesman said Mr. Schlaikjer did the painting in 1957, in preparation for the Lincoln Sesquicentennial. Until the unveiling, it was stored in a Washington museum, away from viewers.

The work was done out of Mr. Schlaikjer's imagination, the spokesman said, but only after the artist has consulted with Lincoln scholars.

2/28/13

New Lincoln Art Bemuses Audience

Nightshirted Abe Might Not Fit Into Small Bed

WASHINGTON (AP) — Something new in the way of Abraham Lincoln paintings turned up on Capitol Hill Monday. It shows Lincoln in a white nightshirt.

The picture, by New York and Washington artist Jes Schlaikjer, was ceremoniously unveiled in the old Senate Office Building rotunda by Sen. John Sherman Cooper (R-Ky.) and a group of other lawmakers before a somewhat bemused audience of exactly 14.

Cooper Enthusiastic
Cooper, chairman of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, was enthusiastic.

"The painting," he said, "has captured the simple dignity, the solemn earnestness and determination of President Lincoln just before the Battle of Antietam."

Some others present were more reserved in their praise for the painting, which depicts the night-shirted Lincoln seated beside a four-poster bed scribbling notes for his Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862.

"What's the nightshirt bit?" inquired one tourist. "They're not trying to make out Lincoln was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, are they?"

Historically Accurate

An official hastily explained that artist Schlaikjer was only trying to be historically accurate—that, in addition to the nightshirt and brocade slippers, the picture includes the stovepipe hat in which Lincoln used to stash notes.

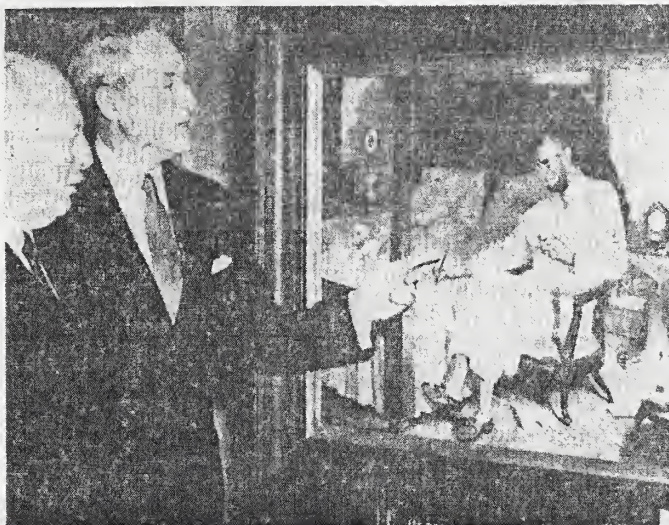
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"He'd have to sleep sideways," Barringer murmured.

A spokesman said Schlaikjer did the painting in 1937, in preparation for the Lincoln sesquicentennial. Until the unveiling, it was stored in a Washington Museum, away from viewers.

The work was done out of Schlaikjer's imagination, the spokesman said, but only after the artist had consulted with Lincoln scholars.



ARTIST JES SCHLAIKJER (LEFT) AND SEN. JOHN COOPER
... painting 'captures simple dignity' of Lincoln

(AP Wirephoto)

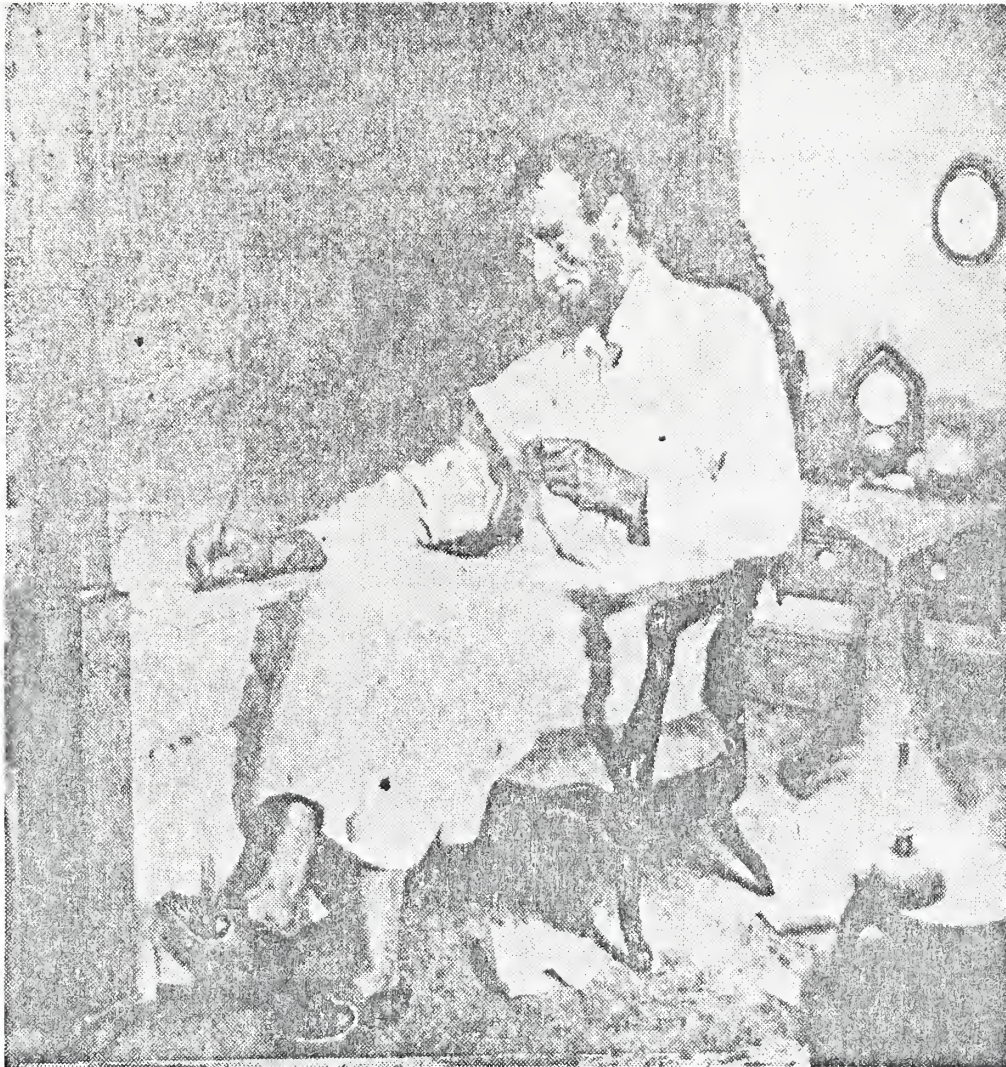
Mr. Lincoln In His Nightshirt

Well, it's different. At least there's that to be said for the painting of Abraham Lincoln in a nightshirt that was unveiled in the Old Senate Office Building rotunda on Monday. Some controversy has arisen over the picture, which is the work of an artist named Jes Schlaikjer. Amateur critics have objected to such details as the lighting, the perspective and, of course, the costuming of the Civil War President. But Sen. John Sherman Cooper, chairman of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Committee, says he likes it and adds the comment that it "has captured the simple dignity, the solemn earnestness and determination of President Lincoln just before the Battle of Antietam."

Most of us are familiar with Lincoln's rugged but gentle features through photographs rather than paintings. The photographer's art had just begun to flourish in his day, and the President was evidently fascinated by it, for he frequently sat for Matthew Brady and Alexander Gardner, two of the great photographers of the day. It probably never occurred to him that some day some one might want a picture of him in his nightshirt. Informality, to say nothing of casualness, was not an element of the pictorial art—whether in photographs or paintings—in those days.

Our own times set great store by the "candid" shot, however; so the President in a nightgown, spectacles perched on his nose, making notes in his bedroom for the Emancipation Proclamation will henceforth become part of the Lincoln gallery. It will give tourists who come to Washington a homey, even a sentimental view of the great man. But it's doubtful whether it will ever replace in any one's mind the noble figure of the Lincoln Memorial, or the "worn but lighted" face—to use Carl Sandburg's phrase—that shines through dozens of familiar photographs.

New 'Study' of Great Emancipator Unveiled



Phila. Eve. Bulletin 3/11/59 AP Wirephoto
Painting of Abraham Lincoln, unveiled yesterday in the rotunda of the old Senate Office Building in Washington, depicts the Civil War president in nightshirt and slippers sitting beside a four-poster bed and making notes for his Emancipation Proclamation. Work is by New York and Washington artist Jes Schlaikjer.

Lincoln in a Nightshirt

Washington—A painting of Abraham Lincoln in a white nightshirt has been unveiled in the rotunda of the old Senate Office Building.

Some lay critics, a little shocked to see the gaunt, bearded President in a night-shirt, were dubious. But Senator John Sherman Cooper, of Lincoln's native state of Kentucky, liked it.

"The painting captured the simple dignity, the solemn earnestness and determination of President Lincoln just before the Battle of Antietam."

So it seemed to me. Too many of our great are pictured to us in marble, or painted on canvas all dressed out as if prepared to give their Sunday-best front to posterity.

Part of America

This picture is a part of America of Lincoln's time. Men did wear nightshirts. The effete pajama had not been invented. Men slept in their underwear or nightshirts. The old kerosene lamp, the daguerreotypes, the four-poster bed—all these are a part of our country that has been gone a long time.

The nightshirt is a long one. Not many inches of the President's thin shanks may be seen. His left leg is crossed over the right at the knee. And on his feet are the old brocaded felt slippers mentioned so often in the stories of the war years.

By RALPH MCGILL

It was his custom to shuffle about the White House on nights when the war news was bad or when there was no word from a great battle known to be in progress. He liked to go and visit with the telegraph operators at the White House, sitting with them, his legs crossed and the old slipper half falling from the crossed foot.

A telegraph operator, David Homer Bates, wrote of the President's rising from an old haircloth sofa, where he often waited while telegrams were being decoded, to discover and brush from the presidential lapel a bedbug.

"Boys," he said, "I've become very fond of that old lounge, but as it has become a little buggy I fear I must stop using it."

Did-It-Himself

Lincoln often walked alone in the streets near the White House, across the way to La-Fayette Park. Once the captain of the White House guards, who knocked each morning on the President's door at 7 o'clock, found Lincoln sewing a button on a shirt which he had to wear. "Come in," he said. And then, "wait until I repair the damage."

America was young in those years. The frontier was near. And not too many years were between young Lincoln, the railsplitter, and the President sewing on a button.

The painting depicts Lincoln working on his notes for the Emancipation Proclamation of September, 1862. He was not in the White House on the night pictured in the painting.

He was staying for a few days at the Soldiers Home three miles out of Washington.

News came that the advantage lay with the Union Army in the Battle of Antietam. Emancipation had been debated for some weeks. Indeed, the President previously had written a preliminary draft, but had put it aside.

News of the battle seemed an omen. He wrote out the notes sitting in his bedroom—much as the painting has it. It was Saturday, September 22.

Moment of History

The preliminary proclamation provided for buying and setting free the slaves of the Border States and the colonizing of them. All freed slaves who wished could have free steamer tickets to Haiti or Liberia. It further provided that on January 1, 1863, all slaves in the states, or part of states, "in rebellion against the Union should be then and thence forward forever free." The proclamation was made public, after Cabinet acceptance, on Monday, September 4.

That night serenaders came with a brass band. The President addressed them from a White House balcony:

"What I did, I did after a very full deliberation . . . I can only trust in God I have made no mistake . . ."

Looking at the picture of the deeply intense man, sitting there in a nightshirt by an old four-poster bed, lost in the momentous notes, one feels glad it occurred as it did. A lonely man, with only the presence of God in the room, was setting in motion one of the great moral movements of all time.



McGill

VanHorn, Cindy

From: Bob Willard [bobwillard@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Sunday, January 09, 2005 9:06 PM
To: Daniel R. Weinberg; Flinspach, Joan; Frank J. Williams; VanHorn, Cindy
Subject: FW: Lincoln Cottage

Friends, Almost two years ago, I told you about my effort to learn the whereabouts of a Lincoln painting that received some notoriety during the Sesquicentennial celebration in 1959. The story now comes to an end and I share with you my note to Sophie Lynn at Soldiers' Home. -Bob

From: Bob Willard [mailto:bobwillard@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Sunday, January 09, 2005 7:41 PM
To: 'Sophia Lynn'
Subject: RE: Lincoln Cottage

Sophie, At long last, I am happy to report that I have located the elusive nightshirt painting by Jes Schlaikjer. Here it is:



I have talked or corresponded with many people - historians, artists, art historians, and others - over two years. A lot of detective work and my share of dead ends, but finally I have found, just as you surmised in your note (below) of April 2003, that "the painting must be in private hands."

At first, I thought it was the property of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission (they *did* purchase some artwork for official use) and I explored the possibility of some government agency like the Smithsonian taking care of it. No luck. I also surmised that Senator John Sherman Cooper, chairman of the Commission, may have personally procured it. He died in 1991 without any children, so I checked with the U of Ky at Lexington where his papers are maintained. No luck there, either, but they suggested I talk to the Senator's brother in Kentucky. I did so and had to assure him that I wasn't accusing the Senator of pilfering the piece! It turns out that someone else had earlier called the brother on the same matter. We both got the same answer: The painting wasn't with Senator Cooper's stuff.

Then I pursued the New York News which had printed the painting on the cover of their Sunday supplement on February 11, 1962 - a fact I discovered on a faded clipping tacked up at the entrance of the Wills house in Gettysburg. At the Library of Congress, I was able to find out a little bit more by looking at the New York News on microfilm, but when I contacted the paper's photo department, they did not have what I was looking for (a color photo of the painting). The byline for the photographers who shot the cover photo read "Arthur Sasse and Lee Elkins" and I was told that Sasse was the same person who took the famous snapshot of Albert Einstein sticking his tongue out. In response to a subsequent question

9/28/2005

about whether they had the paper copy of the 2/11/62 issue, they told me they only had microfilm and offered an 8" by 10" copy from the microfilm for \$35. Of course, I already had a copy, made from the film at the Library of Congress where it cost me 25 cents or less!

I decided to delve more deeply into the records of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission. I had looked at them before; there are 35 or so boxes at the National Archives in College Park. But now I was focused on the painting and I hit paydirt. In addition to the press release about the unveiling, there was correspondence that made it clear the artist had kept it in his possession. It was only on loan to the Commission for about three months. Letters sent out by the Commission told people that they had to write directly to the artist to request a copy (black and white photos at \$9.50). From this correspondence I learned the artist's address in Northwest Washington, DC. (I did check some online real estate records and while I never had to follow down the lead any further, it appears that the people who now live in Jes Schlaikjer's house also work for the same employer as one of the artist's grandsons. But I'm getting ahead of myself, and I don't even know if these co-workers know the connection.)

I knew the artist had died in 1982, but I didn't know if he had any heirs. Fortunately I remembered that one of the earliest contacts I made was with the artist's niece in North Carolina. She had provided me a scan of a newspaper clip about the unveiling of the portrait and she had a number of images her uncle had produced for the War Department and the Red Cross in the forties on her personal website. She also had on the website some genealogical information. (It was this info that allowed me to "Google" her in the first place.) It turned out that Jes Schlaikjer and his wife Gladys had a son and a daughter (both deceased) and that the daughter Helen and her husband Mark had two sons. The only problem was that the genealogical listing spelled the surname of the sons incorrectly! Nonetheless, with a little more detective work I surmised that the two sons both resided in the Washington, DC area. With fingers crossed (hard to dial a phone that way), I called one of them. I explained what I was looking for and was delighted to learn that the painting was still in the possession of the family. I promised to email some information on the Lincoln Cottage as well as on myself, so that the family could consider what they might be willing to do in terms of the Lincoln Cottage's use of the painting. I got a message back a little later, with a digital copy of the painting attached, saying that the family was willing to consider its use.

I wrote back, saying "Obviously, I cannot speak for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, but I am sure they will be in touch to discuss how you might allow them to use this unique image in the development of their historic site." I will provide you the contact information separately and hope that you will have the opportunity to get in touch with the family.

It certainly was an interesting pursuit and I hope I didn't bore you too much in its retelling. I plan to share this note with some of the individuals who helped me along the way. -Bob

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"The better part of one's life
consists of his friendships."
-Abraham Lincoln (7/13/1849)

From: Sophia Lynn [mailto:Sophia_Lynn@nthp.org]
Sent: Wednesday, April 23, 2003 3:18 PM
To: 'bobwillard@att.net'
Subject: Lincoln Cottage

9/28/2005

<snip>

In response to your question about that painting of Lincoln in his nightshirt at the Soldiers' Home - the painting that hung in the Senate some decades ago, I, too, spent a few hours recently trying to track down its location. Matt Pinsker wanted to use the image in his forthcoming book (due out in August 2003). But I had no luck, and concluded that the painting must be in private hands. Should you ever locate it yourself, I would be much obliged to learn of your success.

We appreciate your expressions of interest and support for the Lincoln Cottage project. Warm regards,

Sophie

Sophia Lynn
Project Manager
President Lincoln and Soldiers' Home National Monument
National Trust for Historic Preservation



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